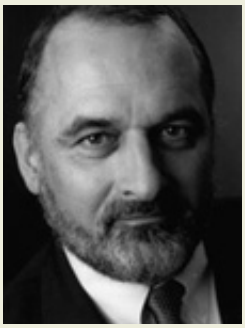
eRobertParker.com

The Independent Consumer's Guide to Fine Wines

05-08-2007, 05:09 AM #1

Mauss Francois
Senior Executive Oenophile



Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Luxembourg
Posts: 4,046

ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

As every year, ALBA WINES is organizing, through WELLCOM, 4 days of tastings (blind or not, as you wish) in the center of Alba.

This morning, we had some barbaresco vintage 2004. My 2 best : Rabajà from Rocca and Rabayà from Cascina Luisin. No other big names (no Gaja).

For the 53 barolo 2003 tasted, I score above 90 points :

- the finesse and complexity of Giacosa "vigna mandorlo", quite above all the other wines.
- the finesse of Parusso "mariondino"
- the class of Ascheri Giacomo "vigna dei pola"
- the great balance of Massolino "vigna rionda"
- the lenght of Luigi Pira "vigna marenca"
- the high typicity of Fontanafredda
- the elegance of Gabutti "gabutti"

Of course, many names were not there : maybe tomorrow morning ?

General feeling about the 2003 : I was little afraid to find some harsh tanins and hard finale. In fact, we find very good balance and, something different from the past, all the wines, except maybe 6 or 8, were not overloaded with new wood : quite a progress in Piemonte ! Bravo !

Best,

_____
Mauss Francois

Il est parfaitement superflu de connaître les choses dont on parle. Je dirais même que la sincérité en général dénote un certain manque d'imagination (MA).

Quand les types de cent trente kilos disent certaines choses, les types de soixante les écoutent (MA, not Michael Pronay).

05-08-2007, 05:43 AM #2

Ulrich Dahl
Riesling fascist

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Hi Francois

Join Date: Nov 2004
Location: Copenhagen
Posts: 329

Thanks for the summary.

Having had the 2003 Pira Marenca recently I'm actually surprised that you didn't find it tannic to the point where it was out of balance (I agree with the length, however). I have found my best Baroli 2003's from some of the 'lesser' vinyards with cooler climates/less sun exposure.

05-08-2007, 05:55 AM #3

Stefan Töpler
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Siegen - Germany
Posts: 4,786

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Francois,

Thanks! Which other Barbaresco 2004 did you taste? Only two of them were to your liking? That would be disappointing given the high expectations about this vintage.

Regarding Barolo 2003 seems you have discovered some nice surprises like the Fratelli Giacosa or the Gabutti (Boasso, I guess).

You mention a Vigna Rionda from Massolino. If you are refering to the single vineyard selection this was not made in 2003 so I guess you had the 2001 Riserva or did you have their 2003 "base" - the only one they made in 2003.

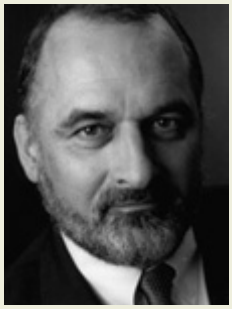
Any particular disappointments? Thanks!

Cheers! Stefan

_____
ITB

05-08-2007, 06:06 AM #4

Mauss Francois
Senior Executive Oenophile



Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Luxembourg
Posts: 4,046

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

We did not had many barbaresco : around 24.

Average score is 87. Only Bruno Rocca is 92. Again, as I say, I am not an expert in early tastings, but the general feeling was a good balance in general and if the tanins are presents, they are not "harsh".

About barolos : on the document received after tasting : they say : Gabutti "cru gabutti".

Massolino : it is, yes, the basic wine : they just put as name of the domaine : massolino - vigna rionda (I suppose they are more than one Massolino ?).

Again, many names were missing.

_____
Mauss Francois

Il est parfaitement superflu de connaître les choses dont on parle. Je dirais même que la sincérité en général dénote un certain manque d'imagination (MA).

Quand les types de cent trente kilos disent certaines choses, les types de soixante les écoutent (MA, not Michael Pronay).

05-08-2007, 06:31 AM #5

Stefan Töpler
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Siegen - Germany
Posts: 4,786

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Mauss Francois**
> *We did not had many barbaresco : around 24.*
>
> *Average score is 87. Only Bruno Rocca is 92. Again, as I say, I am not an expert in early tastings, but the general feeling was a good balance in general and if the tanins are presents, they are not "harsh".*
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> *About barolos : on the document received after tasting : they say : Gabutti "cru gabutti".*
>
> *Massolino : it is, yes, the basic wine : they just put as name of the domaine : massolino - vigna rionda (I suppose they are more than one Massolino ?).*
>
> *Again, many names were missing.*

Francois,

Very much agree on the 2003 Massolino. It's an excellent Barolo at a very reasonable price. They did not consider 2003 good enough for single vineyard bottlings so all the fruit from Vigna Rionda, Parafada and Margheria made it into the "base". Excellent!

Cheers! Stefan

_____
ITB

05-08-2007, 08:14 AM #6

rico thompson
Italiaphiliac

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Great focused and direct report.....very nice to read your impressions Francois! Hope all's well.

_____
ciao,
rico
Grande Duca, The Tannic Cult

Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Mount Nebbiolo, Colorado
Posts: 8,212

itb

05-08-2007, 09:17 AM #7

Mauss Francois

Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Luxembourg
Posts: 4,046

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Rico : I am very concerned by your arms keeping always the same position on this rock ! Don't you get tired and tetanized ? The bottle at the summit is not appropriate to your taste ?

Great Guys are the climbers !

_____
Mauss Francois

Il est parfaitement superflu de connaître les choses dont on parle. Je dirais même que la sincérité en général dénote un certain manque d'imagination (MA).

Quand les types de cent trente kilos disent certaines choses, les types de soixante les écoutent (MA, not Michael Pronay).

05-08-2007, 09:31 AM #8

rico thompson

Italiaphiliac

Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Mount Nebbiolo, Colorado
Posts: 8,212

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

truth be told, I'm suffering from lactic build-up in the forearms.....

_____
ciao,
rico
Grande Duca, The Tannic Cult
itb

05-08-2007, 09:51 AM #9

Gary York
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Dec 2002
Location: Richmond, VA.
Posts: 1,284

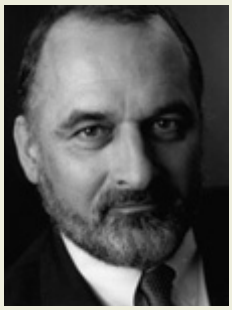
Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

The wines of 03/04 I am not concerned about. It's the prices. I got a pre-sale sheet last week. First time that I have ever seen a wine not named Gaja or Giacosa priced at over $1,000 a case. Very scary.

_____
If I had my way, I'd have all of you shot. *In the flesh(II) Pink Floyd*

05-08-2007, 10:02 AM #10

Mauss Francois
Senior Executive Oenophile



Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Luxembourg
Posts: 4,046

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Gary : wait when it will be the value, not of a case, but of a single bottle !

Maybe this will arrive only when the future Pope be a japanese, but who knows in this crazy world ?

_____
Mauss Francois

Il est parfaitement superflu de connaître les choses dont on parle. Je dirais même que la sincérité en général dénote un certain manque d'imagination (MA).

Quand les types de cent trente kilos disent certaines choses, les types de soixante les écoutent (MA, not Michael Pronay).

05-08-2007, 03:55 PM #11

Loren Sonkin
Will work for wine

Join Date: Apr 2003
Location: Cleveland Hts., Ohio
Posts: 8,004

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Very useful information. Thank you. Can you compare 03 to prior vintages or was it freakish there too?

_____
With regards, Loren

Scoring: 50 (if drinkable) +5 (appearance) +15 (nose) + 20 (palate) + 10 (finish, other, etc.)=100

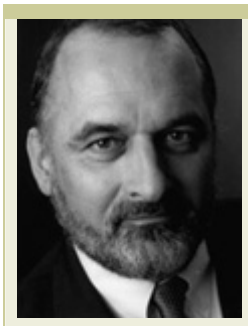
05-08-2007, 05:04 PM #12

Mauss Francois
Senior Executive Oenophile

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

We have more barolo to go tomorrow and I will get a better view of the vintage.

I need a good sleep after a nice evening in Neive at Contea.



Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Luxembourg
Posts: 4,046

A nice magnum barbaresco Giacosa Fratelli of 78. And a truly great Bric balin 97 di Moccagatta.

_____
Mauss Francois

Il est parfaitement superflu de connaître les choses dont on parle. Je dirais même que la sincérité en général dénote un certain manque d'imagination (MA).

Quand les types de cent trente kilos disent certaines choses, les types de soixante les écoutent (MA, not Michael Pronay).

05-08-2007, 05:13 PM #13

kelly walker
Legato d'Onore de Lega del Chianti

Join Date: Jan 2002
Location: Charlotte, NC
Posts: 3,553

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **rico thompson**
> *truth be told, I'm suffering from lactic build-up in the forearms.....*

You need to malo out...

Thanks for the report Francois. I would much rather be in Alba now.

_____
Kelly

_____ _____

"All we got is white wine regular"

05-09-2007, 12:17 AM #14

Birger Vejrum
Viva Piemonte.

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Ringsted, Denmark.
Posts: 2,742

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Mauss Francois**
> *As every year, ALBA WINES is organizing, through WELLCOM, 4 days of tastings (blind or not, as you wish) in the center of Alba.*
>
> *This morning, we had some barbaresco vintage 2004. My 2 best : Rabajà from Rocca and Rabayà from Cascina Luisin. No other big names (no Gaja).*
>
> *Best,*

Hi Francois,

Nice notes, thanks.

Funny and great with the Cascina Luisin Barbaresco 2004, it must be barrel samples as the wine is not released yet.

Disclaimer: I import the Cascina Luisin wines to Denmark.

Ciao
Birger

05-09-2007, 04:17 AM #15

Stefan Töpler
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Siegen - Germany
Posts: 4,786

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Gary York**
> *The wines of 03/04 I am not concerned about. It's the prices. I got a pre-sale sheet last week. First time that I have ever seen a wine not named Gaja or Giacosa priced at over $1,000 a case. Very scary.*

Gary,

Are these price increases due to exchange rate movements or general price increases ex-cellar? Thanks!

Cheers! Stefan

_____
ITB

05-09-2007, 07:38 AM #16

rico thompson
Italiaphiliac

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Stefan, current pathetic exchange rate is certainly influencing prices.....very frustrating times for the American wine buyer

Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Mount Nebbiolo, Colorado
Posts: 8,212

who loves European wines.

_____
ciao,
rico
Grande Duca, The Tannic Cult
itb

05-09-2007, 08:19 AM #17

Stefan Töpler
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Siegen - Germany
Posts: 4,786

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Rico,

In general, what I have picked up talking with producers in the Barbaresco area in recent months seems that some want to increase the prices (in Euro!) of their 2004 Barbarescos over that of their 2001s. Not sure that will work for more than a hand full of top-producers who already have a good standing. Apart from those, the majority of Barbaresco producers seems to have problems selling their wine and I doubt they will be able to get higher Euro prices. And I doubt even more that they could maintain STABLE EURO prices for the US-market given the very week Dollar. Not sure what their price strategy will be for the US. And given the importance of this market they really have to sit down and think a bit ... I understand that many sell 50% or more to the US, not least because during recent years of crisis in Europe the US-market has absorbed additional quantities which could not be sold in Europe. Now the first challenge is to get European buyers back on board (which should be possible given the excellent quality of the 2004 vintage) but whether this works with higher prices ...? The second challenge, perhaps the most important one, is to keep the US buyers on board and I cannot imagine that will be possible without major price concessions ...

Well, Barolo producers seem to be in a better situation. The image of Barolo is still much better than that of Barbaresco ...

Cheers! Stefan

_____
ITB

05-09-2007, 10:02 AM #18

Gary York
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Dec 2002
Location: Richmond, VA.
Posts: 1,284

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Stefan,
I am not 100% sure where the increases are coming from. It's probably a combination of Euro-importer-dist. My mark-up is low. If prices continue to escalate, it will slow the

US market. Only Bordeaux seems to find enough suckers/point chasers to go along with their price increases no matter how ridiculous/absurd. Maybe Piedmont needs to declare a vintage of the century every other year or so as in Bordeaux.

_____
If I had my way, I'd have all of you shot. *In the flesh(II) Pink Floyd*

05-09-2007, 10:09 AM #19

Mauss Francois

Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Jan 2004
Location: Luxembourg
Posts: 4,046

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Today, around 74 wines, always blind.

2003 does not seem to be a spectacular vintage, but good to very good.

The big surprise : less than 12 wines too woody

Majority of wines around 87 and 89 points

Over 90 :

Renato Ratti
L'Illuminata
Mauro Veglio
Marcarini
Both Sandrone (Vigne and Cannubi Boschis)
Marco Oberto
Ferrero
Gagliasso Mario (unknown to me up today)
Renato Corino
Gagliardo
Cascina Adelaide
Rinaldi Francesco

Best,

_____
Mauss Francois

Il est parfaitement superflu de connaître les choses dont on parle. Je dirais même que la sincérité en général dénote un certain manque d'imagination (MA).

Quand les types de cent trente kilos disent certaines choses, les types de soixante les écoutent (MA, not Michael Pronay).

05-09-2007, 10:17 AM #20

Stefan Töpler
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Siegen - Germany
Posts: 4,786

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Francois,

Many thanks again for some feedback about the Barolo 2003 tasting. Good news that the "oak level" seems to be down compared to recent past.

So far I have tasted only a few of those you rated 90+ pts. Among them the Marcarini Brunate was very good (did you have the Brunate or the La Serra?), also the F. Rinaldi Brunate (did you have the Brunate or the Cannubi?). - Is Marco Oberto in some way related to Andrea Oberto? Thanks!

Cheers! Stefan

_____
ITB

05-09-2007, 10:19 AM #21

Stefan Töpler
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Aug 2004
Location: Siegen - Germany
Posts: 4,786

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Quote:

> Originally Posted by **Gary York**
> *Maybe Piedmont needs to declare a vintage of the century every other year or so as in Bordeaux.*

I suspect 2004 could be a candidate ... ☺

Cheers! Stefan

_____
ITB

05-09-2007, 10:36 AM #22

Gary York
Senior Executive Oenophile

Join Date: Dec 2002
Location: Richmond, VA.
Posts: 1,284

Re: ALBA WINES : barbaresco 2004 and barolo 2003

Yes 2004 is shaping up to be a great vintage. I am looking forward to tasting them. Here in the US, I have seen very little to no Barbaresco.

_____
If I had my way, I'd have all of you shot. *In the flesh(II) Pink Floyd*